

Impact Assessment

The City of Chicopee's goal is to meet the requirements of the Army Corps of Engineers while minimally disturbing the surrounding ecosystem, therefore keeping its citizens safe while minimally impacting the environment.

The area of the project is spread out over the entire 6.6 mile length of the dikes.

A major portion of the work in the riverfront area will be the removal of vegetation on or in close proximity to the dike. Invasive species make up a large portion of this vegetation. These include Oriental bittersweet, Japanese knotweed, burning bush and black locust. Any additional impact is on the land side of the dike, which affect non-native species in a manicured residential setting.

The City expects no significant impact to wetlands as a result of this project.

The impact of the project on wildlife habitat has been addressed by a Wildlife Habitat Evaluation. There will be a small reduction in forest cover. This reduction will cause a change from one form of habitat, forest, to another, grassland.

All tree/vegetation removal will be on City property mostly within 15 feet of the base of the dike.



The above photo shows another example of encroaching vegetation on the dike in the Plainfield St. area.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends that owners of property located behind the levee purchase flood insurance because there is still the possibility that a flood could occur that is greater than the flood used in the design of the levee.

If you have any questions or concerns on how this project will affect you, please call the Water Pollution Control Facility at the number listed below.

City of Chicopee
Water Pollution Control
80 Medina Street
(413)-594-3585

Chicopee Flood Control



Maintenance Project

City of Chicopee Flood Control

The City of Chicopee has approximately 6.6 miles of flood control dike and wall along the Chicopee and Connecticut Rivers. This flood control system provides protection to a significant amount of residences, businesses and infrastructure. This system was built by the Army Corps of Engineers between 1936 and 1942. Part of the Corp's duty is to routinely inspect the flood control system.

The City of Chicopee has diligently worked over the years to maintain the flood control protection works in compliance with the Army Corps regulations. The Corps has recently reconsidered its requirements for maintenance along dikes and floodwalls that it constructed. This reevaluation was due to unfortunate events in other parts of the country in recent years. As a result of a 2006 inspection of dikes and floodwalls the

Army Corps issued a letter of deficiency to the City of Chicopee. This letter of deficiency requires significant work far beyond previous maintenance activities.

The consequence for not complying with the Army Corps requirements are decertification of the entire system and redelineation of the flood plain. The impact on the City would be increased insurance costs, decreased property value and decreased flood safety.

The problems of the flood control system are due to vegetation growing in areas inaccessible to mowing, motorized vehicle traffic on the dike from residential areas and the recent reevaluation of the Army Corps regulation.

In order to meet Army Corps requirements the City will be doing the following:

- **Vegetation Removal**

The removal of vegetation is the most extensive part of the project. This ranges from shrub removal to whole tree and root ball removal.

Vegetation that is on the dike or within 15 feet of the toe of the dike or within 8 feet of the flood wall will be removed. The photo below shows some of the vegetation slated for removal as it is growing on the dike.



- **Establish Annual Maintenance**

The City will be required to create an annual plan for vegetation removal and herbicide treatment of the entire flood control works

Scope of Work

- **Repair of Erosion**

Areas of the dike have minor erosion due to dumping of yard waste or illegal motor vehicle traffic on the dike. These areas will be filled in and strengthened. Animal burrows will be removed and the dike repaired. The picture below shows erosion of dike due to heavy traffic and encroaching vegetation.



- **Structural Repairs**

Minor repairs such as replacing grouting in existing flood walls, repairing stop log structures and flood control buildings.

